Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-41 (Canceled).

Claim 42 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 81, wherein at least one guiding element is displaceably arranged in the base body.

Claim 43 (Canceled).

Claim 44 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 81, wherein three guiding elements are arranged about the welding wire.

Claim 45 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 42, wherein the base body centrically arranged in the drive sleeve.

Claim 46 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 45, wherein the drive sleeve is formed with an internal thread adapted to the contour of the transport element and engaged by at least one transport element.

Claim 47 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 46, wherein each of the internal thread of the drive sleeve, the base body and the guiding elements is conically designed.

Claim 48 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 46, wherein the base body comprises a cylindrical projection, wherein the cylindrical projection is mounted in the interior of the drive sleeve.

Claim 49 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 48, wherein the base body, on its side located opposite the projection, comprises a rectangularly designed positioning flange.

Claim 50 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 49, the positioning flange is connected with a retention element in a torque proof manner.

Claim 51 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 50, wherein the drive sleeve is connected with a coupling element, said coupling element being arranged on the opposite side of the retention element.

Claim 52 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 51, wherein the coupling element or the drive sleeve is directly connected with a drive.

Claim 53 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 52, wherein the drive is arranged axially to the wire feed device.

Claim 54 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 53, wherein the drive comprises a hollow shaft, wherein the hollow shaft is connected with the coupling

element and wherein the welding wire is passable through the hollow shaft to the wire feed device.

Claim 55 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 52, wherein the drive is rotationally connected with a further retention element.

Claim 56 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed according to claim 42, wherein a pressure element is arranged in the base body so as to be positioned between the positioning flange and the guiding elements and to exert a pressure force onto the guiding elements.

Claim 57 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 42, wherein each guiding element comprises a guide groove and at least one guide pin is arranged on the base body to engage said guide groove of the guiding element.

Claim 58 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 81, wherein each transport element is designed in the form of a ball.

Claim 59 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 45, wherein the drive sleeve has an outer diameter of between 20mm and 30mm.

Claim 60 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 81, wherein the wire feed device is arranged in at least one of a welding torch and a welding apparatus.

Claim 61 (Currently Amended) : A method for feeding a welding wire from a wire storage to a point of consumption, wherein a plurality of guiding elements for guiding the welding wire are arranged in a base body, each guiding element including a guide path along which a plurality of transport elements are successively and displaceably mounted, wherein the guiding elements and the base body are arranged in a drive sleeve to form a drive mechanism connected with at least one transport element of each guiding element, the method comprising the following steps:

guiding ~~a~~ the welding wire through at least one guide element of the guiding elements,

contacting said welding wire with at least one transport element of the plurality of transport elements on a side of the respective guiding element facing the welding wire, wherein said at least one transport element is shaped as a ball;

displacing at least one further transport element of the plurality of transport elements via the drive mechanism on at least one further side of the guiding element, thus causing the transport elements arranged in the guide path to be moved on by said at least one further transport element displaced by the drive mechanism wherein said transport elements move in a circulating manner within the guide path;

displacing at least one guiding element of the plurality of guiding elements for adaptation to the diameter of the welding wire.

wherein the drive sleeve of the drive mechanism is formed with an internal thread adapted to the contour of said transport elements and engaged by at least one transport element of the plurality of transport elements.

Claim 62 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 61, wherein each guiding element is displaced in the base body in at least one of a longitudinal and a vertical direction.

Claim 63 (Canceled).

Claim 64 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 62, wherein three guiding elements, offset by 120 degrees, are arranged in the base body.

Claim 65 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 62, wherein the base body is centrically arranged in the drive sleeve.

Claim 66 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 65, wherein at least one transport element engages a thread of the drive sleeve, with a contour of the thread being adapted to a contour of the transport element.

Claim 67 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 66, wherein each of the thread of the drive sleeve, the base body and the guiding elements is conically designed.

Claim 68 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 66, wherein the base body comprises a cylindrical projection the base body being mounted in the interior of the drive sleeve via the cylindrical projection.

Claim 69 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 68, wherein the base body, on its side located opposite the projection, comprises a rectangularly designed positioning flange.

Claim 70 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 69, wherein the positioning flange is connected with a retention element in a torque proof manner.

Claim 71 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 70, wherein a coupling element s connected with the drive sleeve on the opposite side of the retention element.

Claim 72 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 71, wherein the coupling element or the drive sleeve is directly connected with a drive.

Claim 73 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 72, wherein the drive is arranged axially to the wire feed device.\

Claim 74 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 73, wherein the drive is connected with the coupling element via a hollow shaft arranged in the drive, said welding wire being fed through said hollow shaft.

Claim 75 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 72, wherein the drive is rotationally connected with a further retention element.

Claim 76 (Currently Amended) : The feeding method according to claim 62, wherein a pressure force is exerted on the guiding element by a pressure element arranged in the base body between the positioning flange and the guiding element.

Claim 77 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 62, wherein at least one guide pin arranged on the base body engages a guide groove of the guiding element and the guiding element is displaced via said assembly.

Claim 78 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 61, wherein the transport element is designed in the form of a ball.

Claim 79 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 65, wherein the drive sleeve has an outer diameter of between 20mm and 30mm.

Claim 80 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 86, wherein the wire feed device is arranged in at least one of a welding torch and a welding apparatus.

Claim 81 (Currently Amended): A wire feed device for transporting a welding wire from a wire storage to a point of consumption comprising:

(a) a plurality of guiding elements for guiding the welding wire, each guiding element including a guide path;

(b) a plurality of transport elements which are successively and displaceably mounted inside of said guide path of said guiding element, wherein at least one transport element is formed as a ball;

(c) a base body; and

(d) a drive sleeve connected with at least one transport element of each guiding element, wherein said drive sleeve has an internal thread adapted to the contour of said plurality of transport elements, and engaged by at least one transport element of said plurality of transport elements;

wherein at least one further transport element is connected with the welding wire in at least one of a force locking manner and a form-locking manner;

wherein the base body and the guiding elements are arranged in the drive sleeve; and

wherein at least one guiding element is displaceably arranged to adapt to a diameter of the welding wire and comprises a said guide path wherein said plurality of transport elements move in a circulating manner within said guide path.

Claim 82 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 44, wherein the guiding elements are offset by an angle of 120 degrees.

Claim 83 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 48, wherein the base body is mounted in the interior of the drive sleeve via a bearing assembly.

Claim 84 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 52, wherein the drive connecting the coupling element or the drive sleeve is an electromotor.

Claim 85 (Previously Presented) : The wire feed device according to claim 55, wherein the drive comprises a drive casing rotationally connected with the further connection element.

Claim 86 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 68, wherein the base body is mounted in the interior of the drive sleeve via a bearing assembly.

Claim 87 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 72, wherein the drive is an electromotor.

Claim 88 (Previously Presented) : The feeding method according to claim 75, wherein the drive comprises a drive casing rotationally connected with the further connection element.

89. (Previously Presented) The method as in claim 61, wherein said guide path of said guide element is contoured to a shape of at least one of said plurality of transport elements.

90. (Canceled)

91. (Previously Presented) The wire feed device as in claim 81, wherein said guide path of said guide element is contoured to a shape of at least one of said plurality of transport elements.

92. (Canceled)

93. (Currently Amended) A method for feeding a welding wire from a wire storage to a point of consumption, wherein a plurality of guiding elements for guiding the welding wire are arranged in a base body, each guiding element including a guide path along which a plurality of transport elements are successively and displaceably mounted, wherein the guiding elements and the base body are arranged in a drive sleeve to form a drive mechanism connected with at least one transport element of each guiding element, the method comprising the following steps:

guiding ~~a~~ the welding wire through at least one guide element of the plurality of guide elements,

contacting said welding wire with at least one transport element of the plurality of transport elements on a side of the respective guiding element facing the welding wire, wherein

said at least one transport element is formed in a shape comprising at least one of: balls, rollers, oval shaped cylinders, or circular shaped cylinders;

displacing at least one further transport element of the plurality of transport elements via the drive mechanism on at least one further side of the guiding element, thus causing the transport elements arranged in the guide path to be moved on by said at least one further transport element of the plurality of transport elements displaced by the drive mechanism;

displacing at least one guiding element of the plurality of guiding elements for adaptation to the diameter of the welding
wire;

wherein the drive mechanism has a drive sleeve that is formed with an internal thread adapted to the contour of said transport elements and engaged by at least one transport element of the plurality of transport elements wherein said plurality of transport elements move in a circulating manner within the guide path.

94. (Currently Amended) A wire feed device for transporting a welding wire from a wire storage to a point of consumption comprising:

(a) a plurality of guiding elements for guiding the welding wire, each guiding element including a guide path;

(b) a plurality of transport elements which are successively and displaceably mounted inside of said guide path of said guiding element, wherein said at least one transport element is formed in a shape comprising at least one of:

balls, rollers, oval shaped cylinders, or circular shaped cylinders

(c) a base body; and

(d) a drive sleeve connected with at least one transport element of each guiding element, wherein said drive sleeve has an internal thread adapted to the contour of said plurality of transport elements, and engaged by at least one transport element of said plurality of transport elements;

wherein at least one further transport element is connected with the welding wire in at least one of a force locking manner and a form-locking manner;

wherein the base body and the guiding elements are arranged in the drive sleeve; and wherein at least one guiding element is displaceably arranged to adapt to a diameter of the welding wire wherein said transport elements move in a circulating manner within said guide path.

95. (New) The method as in claim 61, further comprising the step of driving the guide sleeve to drive said transport elements within a thread of said guide sleeve, to guide said

transport elements within said guide path to form a plurality of pressure points on the welding wire while feeding the welding wire.

96. (New) The device as in claim 81, wherein said drive sleeve further comprises a thread, and wherein the device further comprises a drive coupled to said drive sleeve, said drive being configured to drive said drive sleeve to drive said transport elements within said thread of said drive sleeve to guide said transport elements in said guide path via said drive sleeve to form a plurality of pressure points on the welding wire while feeding the welding wire.

97. (New) The method as in claim 93, further comprising the step of driving the guide sleeve to drive said transport elements within a thread of said guide sleeve, to guide said transport elements within said guide path to form a plurality of pressure points on the welding wire while feeding the welding wire.

98. (New) The device as in claim 94, wherein said drive sleeve further comprises a thread, and wherein the device further comprises a drive coupled to said drive sleeve, said drive being configured to drive said drive sleeve to drive said transport elements within said thread of said drive sleeve to guide said transport elements in said guide path via said drive sleeve to form a plurality of pressure points on the welding wire while feeding the welding wire.